DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 451 905 PS 029 360

TITLE	FACES Findings: New Research on Head Start Program Quality and Outcomes.
INSTITUTION	Administration for Children, Youth, and Families (DHHS), Washington, DC. Head Start Bureau.
PUB DATE	2000-06-00
NOTE	17p.
AVAILABLE FROM	Administration on Children, Youth and Families, 330 C Street, S.W., Room 2128, Washington, DC 20447. Fax: 703-683-5769; e-mail: puborder@hskids-tmsc.org; Web site: http://www.2acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/hsreac/faces.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Classroom Environment; *Early Intervention; *Educational Quality; *Family Environment; Family (Sociological Unit); Interpersonal Competence; Low Income Groups; *Outcomes of Education; Parent Child Relationship; *Preschool Children; Preschool Education; School Readiness; Vocabulary Development
IDENTIFIERS	Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey; *Project Head Start

ABSTRACT

The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), launched in Spring 1997, is an integral part of Head Start's system of Program Performance Measures, an outcome-oriented accountability system examining the quality and effects of Head Start, by annually collecting data on a nationally representative sample of programs, classrooms, teacher, parents, and children. This pamphlet presents information based on data collected in Spring 1997, Fall 1997, and Spring 1998. Data were collected using the Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale, the Amett Scale of Caregiver Behavior, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Third Edition, selected scales from the Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised, a social skills scale, and the Child Observation Rating. Findings are presented in three areas: classroom quality; benefits to children; and benefits to families. Among the findings highlighted are the following: (1) Head Start classrooms have higher quality than most center-based early childhood programs; (2) among classroom strengths are the schedule, atmosphere, provisions for parents, and provisions for children with special needs; (3) benefits to children included significant growth in vocabulary, improvement in social skills and relationships, and gains in school readiness; (4) benefits to families included their reading to children, involving children in family activities, actively participating in their children's Head Start activities, and being satisfied with the program. The pamphlet concludes with a description of additional Head Start initiatives to apply the research findings and sources for additional information. (KB)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 451 905

FACES FINDINGS:

New Research on Head Start Program Quality and Outcomes

June 2000

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

Head Start

F A C E S

family and child experiences survey

PS 029360

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Administration for Children and Families
Administration on Children, Youth and Families
Commissioner's Office of Research and Evaluation
and the Head Start Bureau

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

About the study...

The Head Start Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES), launched in Spring 1997, is an integral part of Head Start's system of Program Performance Measures, an outcome-oriented accountability system. FACES collects data annually on a nationally representative sample of Head Start programs, classrooms, teachers, parents, and children examining the quality and effects of Head Start. The Spring 1997 field test collected data on 2,400 children and their families; the sample in later data collections was increased to 3,200 children and families in 40 programs.

Information presented in this publication is based on data collected in Spring 1997, Fall 1997, and Spring 1998 through the following instruments:

- *The Early Childhood Environment Rating Scale (ECERS)*—which consists of 37 scales measuring a wide variety of quality-related processes occurring in the classroom. Items are rated on a 7-point scale, with the following anchors: (1) inadequate, (3) minimal, (5) good, and (7) excellent.

- *The Arnett Scale of Caregiver Behavior (Arnett)*—which rates teacher behavior toward children in the class.

- *The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test, Third Edition (PPVT)*—which measures children's word knowledge. The mean for children of all income groups is 100, with a standard deviation of 15.

- *Selected scales from the Woodcock Johnson Psycho-Educational Battery-Revised (WJ-R)*, including the Letter-Word Identification, Applied Problems, and Dictation Tasks, which assess children's prereading skills, early counting and arithmetic skills, and prewriting skills. The mean for children of all income groups is 100, with a standard deviation of 15.

- *Social Skills Scale*—A summary index based on 12 items with 24 possible points related to children's cooperative behavior and social skills.

- *Child Observation Rating (COR)*—Social relations scale of 1 to 5 in which teachers rate children's relation to peers and social problem solving.

Findings from the study are organized into three sections:

(1) Classroom Quality

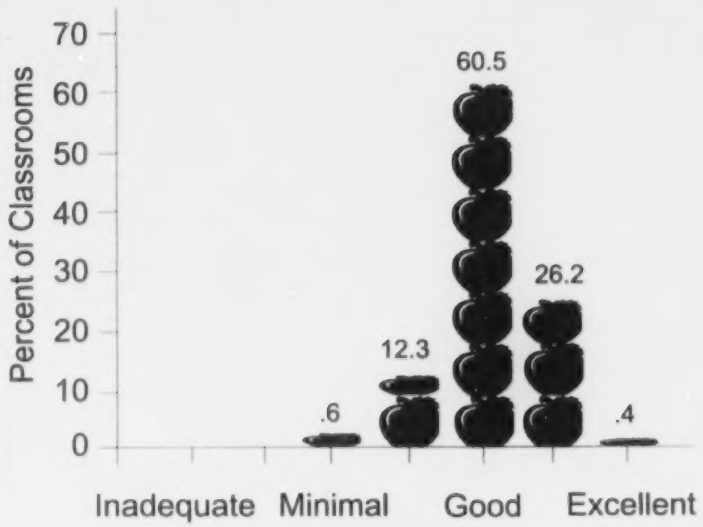
(2) Benefits to Children

(3) Benefits to Families

Classroom Quality

Overall Classroom Quality

Trained observers rated the overall Head Start classroom quality as good. Across the sample of 498 Head Start classrooms, the average ECERS score was 5.1 on a 7-point scale. No classroom had an average score lower than minimal.



ECERS Scores
Spring 1998 data

Quality of Head Start Compared to Other Preschool Programs

Compared with results from six national research studies, Head Start classrooms have higher quality than most center-based early childhood programs. The vertical bars below show that the quality of classrooms in FACES clustered around the good level while the quality in other studies was lower and sometimes fell below the minimal level.

Classroom Quality

Strengths in Head Start Classrooms

- *Schedule*—a balanced daily classroom schedule of activities (33 percent rated "excellent").
- *Tone*—classroom atmosphere was "calm but busy" (43 percent "excellent").
- *Provisions for parents*—a high level of parent involvement in the program (51 percent "excellent").
- *Provisions for children with special needs*—many provisions and a high degree of planning for children with disabilities (58 percent "excellent").
- *Routine care, personal grooming, toileting*—a wide variety of furniture is available and emphasis on routines such as meals and snacks, toileting and personal grooming (38 to 57 percent "excellent").
- *Supervision of gross motor activities*—attentive supervision of children's outdoor activities, with a focus on enhancing children's play (54 percent excellent").

Spring 1997 data

Weaknesses in Head Start Classrooms

- *Cultural awareness*—insufficient multicultural awareness (75 percent rated "lower").
- *Space to be alone*—little space for a child to be alone (73 percent "lower").
- *Child-related display*—classroom displays were often not the children's own work (70 percent "lower").
- *Dramatic play*—dramatic play areas primarily focused on housekeeping and did not encourage play related to work or transportation roles (62 percent "lower").
- *Adult personal area*—few areas were available for staff to relax or meet with parents (61 percent "lower").
- *Relaxation and comfort*—classrooms did not have enough softness or cozy areas (51 percent "lower").

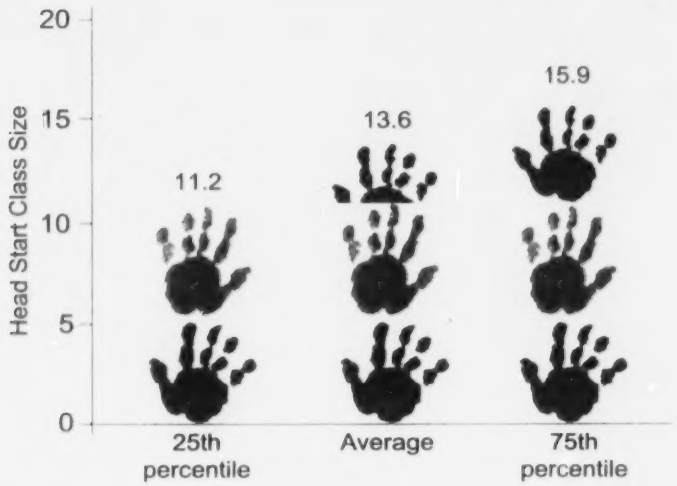
Spring 1997 data

Classroom Quality

Class Size

The class sizes found in FACES suggest that most Head Start programs have smaller class sizes than the Head Start Program Performance Standards and NAEYC accreditation standards require.

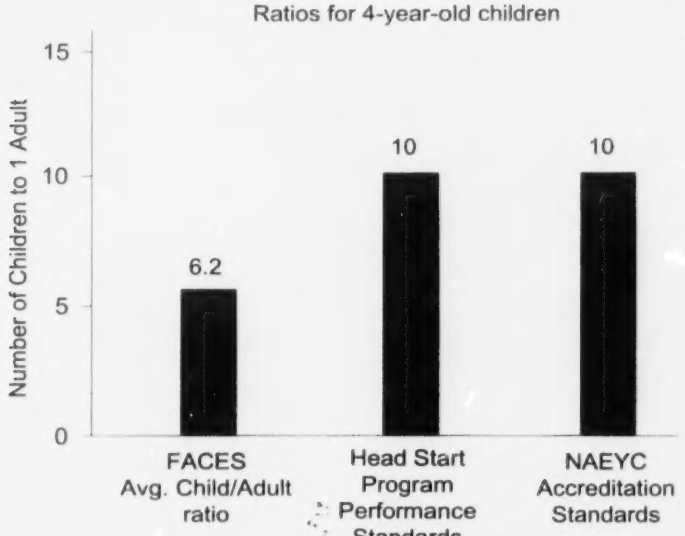
Spring 1997 data



Child/Adult Ratio

The average child/adult ratio for 3- to 5-year-olds in Head Start classrooms (6.2 to 1) was far better than the Head Start Program Performance Standards or the NAEYC accreditation standard, partly due to the presence of volunteers.

Spring 1998 data

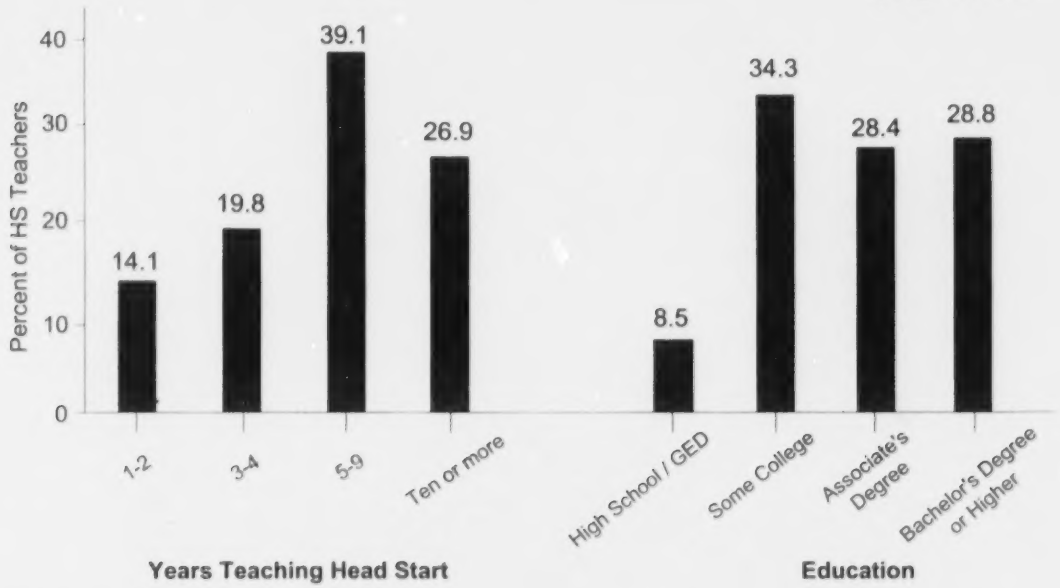


Classroom Quality

Head Start Teachers' Experience and Training

Head Start teachers are experienced and qualified. Over 79 percent of Head Start teachers had their CDA Certificate or other early childhood credential.

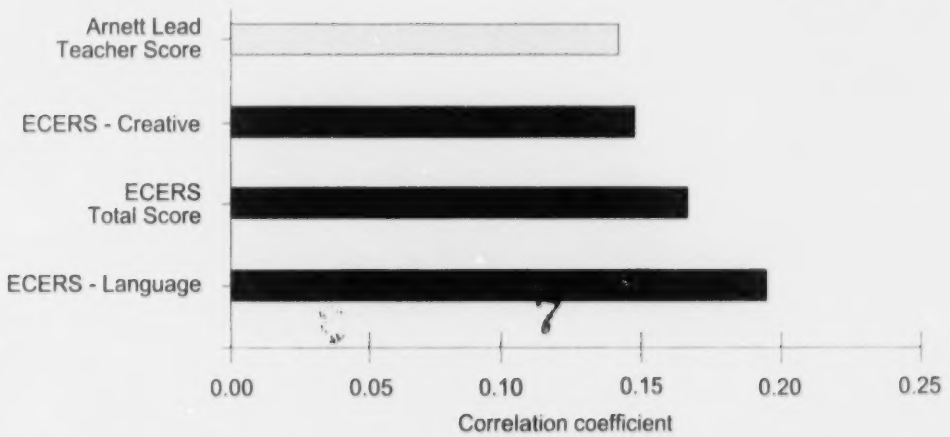
Spring 1998 data



Teachers' Education Level Is Correlated with Classroom Quality

Teachers with higher education levels are more sensitive and responsive, and their classrooms have higher-quality language activities, offer more creative activities to children, and have higher overall quality as rated by the ECERS. There were no significant relationships with years of experience in Head Start and classroom quality.

Spring 1998 data



7

7

Benefits to Children

What Head Start Children Can Do

At the end of the program year, the typical Head Start child possesses a variety of cognitive and social skills that signify a readiness to learn in kindergarten.

- Tell his/her full name and age
- Identify ten basic colors by name
- Show the meaning of basic shape and action words
- Count four objects & solve simple addition & subtraction problems
- Use a pencil to copy a circle or letters like "Z" and "E"
- Correctly repeat a series of 4 spoken digits
- Show the front cover of a story book and open it to start reading
- Answer simple factual questions about a story read to him/her

- Use free time in acceptable ways
- Help in putting work materials away
- Follow the teacher's directions
- Join in activities without being told
- Follow the rules when playing games
- Wait their turn in a game

What Head Start Children Can Not Yet Do

However, there are some skills a typical soon-to-be graduate of Head Start has not yet accomplished.

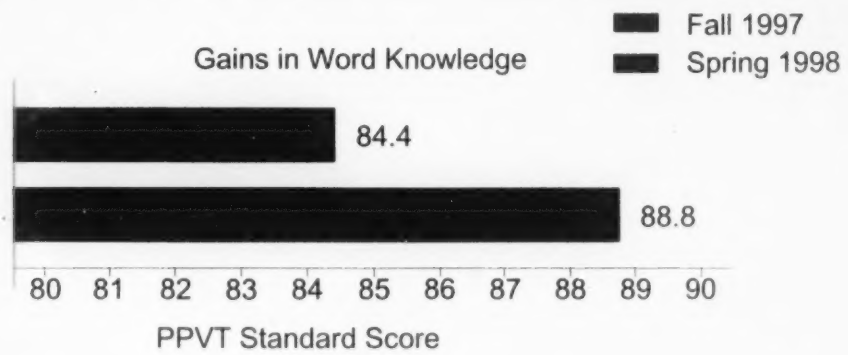
- Tell his/her home address
- Identify most letters of the alphabet
- Show the meaning of less basic shape and action words
- Know that you go from left to right and top to bottom when reading English text
- Accept classmates' ideas for play
- Invite others to join in activities

8

Benefits to Children

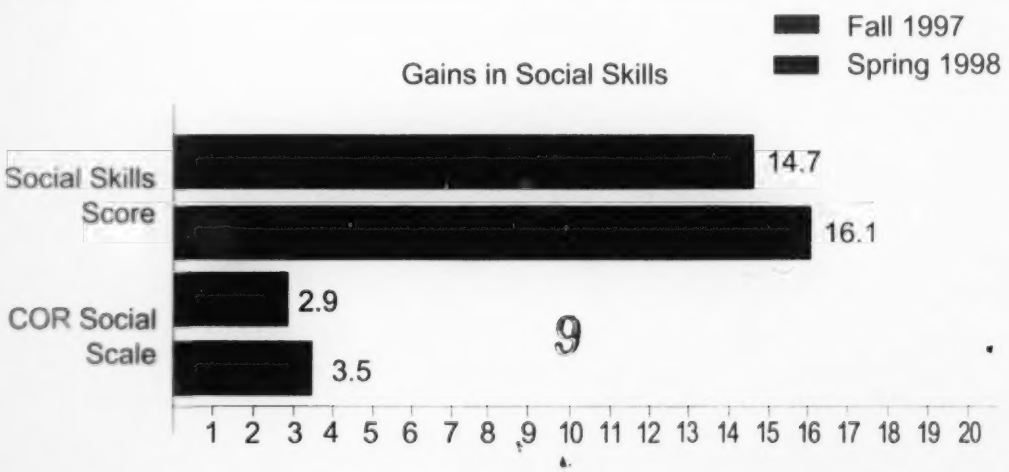
Head Start Children Showed Significant Growth in Their Vocabularies

Over the program year, Head Start children showed significant expansion of their vocabularies and early writing skills. Notably, the proportion of children scoring close to or above the national mean expanded dramatically from 24 to 34 percent from Fall to Spring—nearly a 40 percent increase. However, children showed little progress in letter recognition and book knowledge. While more than two-thirds of teachers reported teaching these skills on a daily basis, these activities were taught far less frequently than any other classroom activity related to academic preparation.



Head Start Children's Social Skills and Relationships Improve

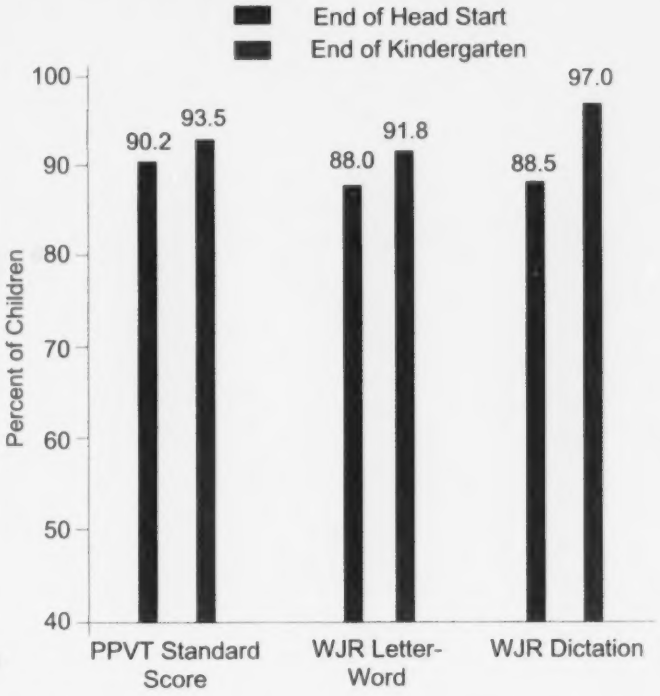
Head Start children showed significant gains in their social skills and cooperative behaviors as rated by teachers and parents. According to teachers, children's social relationships also improved during the program year. However, the number of children with behavior problems (such as emotional or conduct problems), although small, did not change over the course of the year.



Benefits to Children

Head Start Children's Progress in Kindergarten

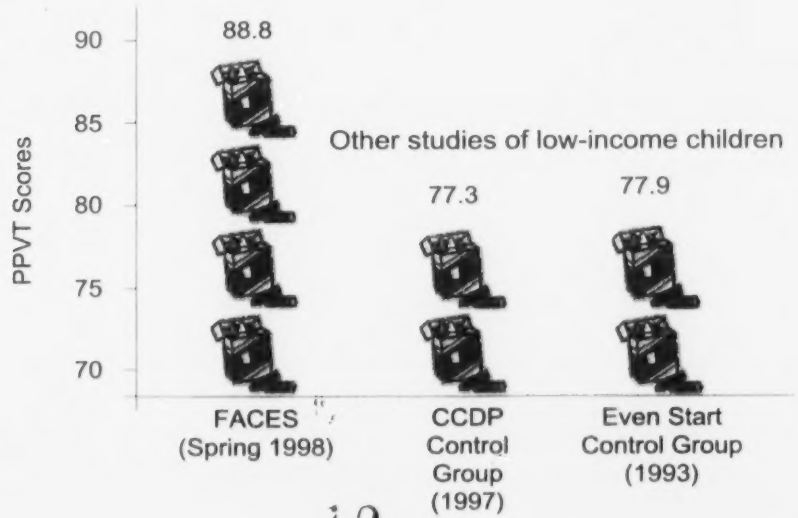
Children leaving Head Start are indeed "ready to learn," because they have learned a great deal by the end of kindergarten. In fact, Head Start graduates' improvement exceeded the growth expected of a typical kindergartner. Head Start graduates showed significant gains in vocabulary, letter recognition, writing, and other prereading skills.



Spring 1997 and Spring 1998 data

Head Start Children Compared to Other Low-Income Children

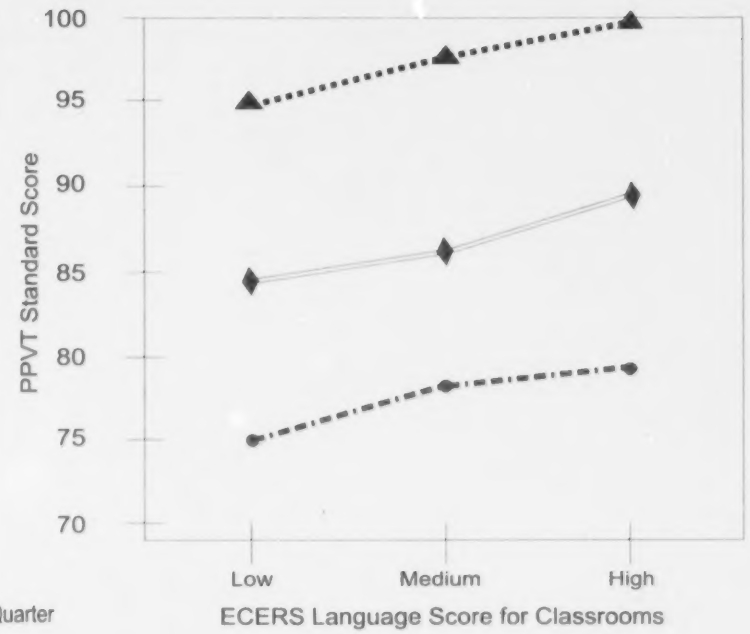
Head Start children were performing above the levels of other low-income children on a measure of vocabulary.



Benefits to Children

Classroom Quality Affects Children's Development

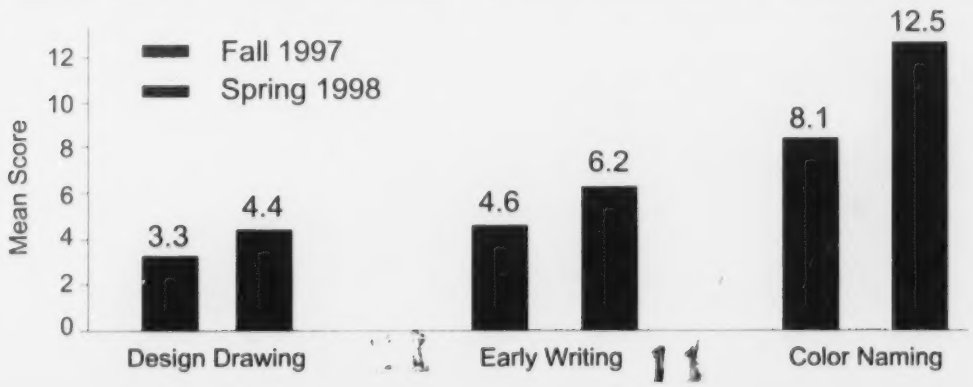
Head Start classrooms that received higher ratings on specific aspects of program quality, such as having richer language learning opportunities, also had children who performed significantly better on assessment tasks, regardless of their baseline ability.



Spring 1997 data
▲ Highest Quarter
◆ Median
◐ Lowest Quarter

Gains of Spanish-Speaking Head Start Children

Language-minority children in Head Start show gains in school readiness and in their knowledge of English. By Spring, most Spanish-speaking children in predominantly English-language programs are able to perform a number of school-related tasks better in English than they had in Spanish in the Fall, or at least as well. Spanish-speaking children in predominantly English-language programs have similar fine motor and early writing skills as their English-speaking peers, but continue to trail other children on tasks that require English-language proficiency.



A Typical Head Start Family

Head Start families share one important characteristic—poverty.

Fall 1997 data

The typical parent:

- Is just as likely to be married as single.
- Is young (between 20 and 30 years of age).
- Has a high school diploma or some college.

Most Head Start families:

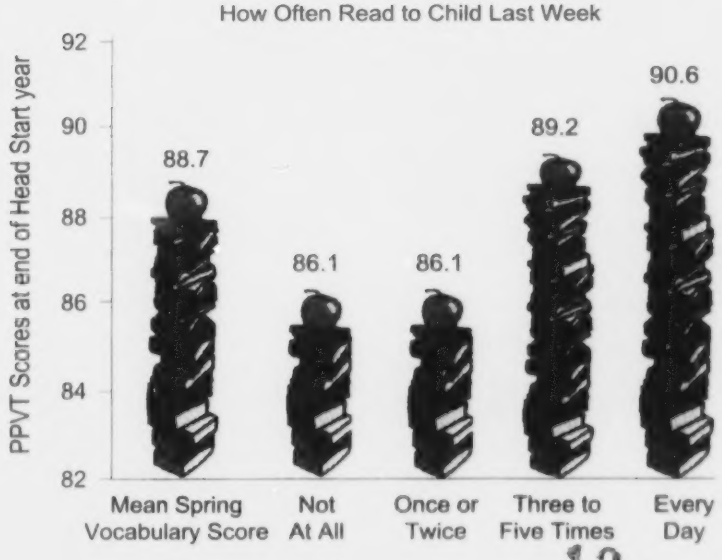
- Have one or two parents employed.
- Have 4 or 5 members (mean of 4.47).

Additionally, almost a third of families saw or heard violent crime in their neighborhood.

Reading to Children

Children whose parents read to them on a daily basis have higher vocabulary scores. Most Head Start families reported reading to their child three or more times a week.

Spring 1998 data

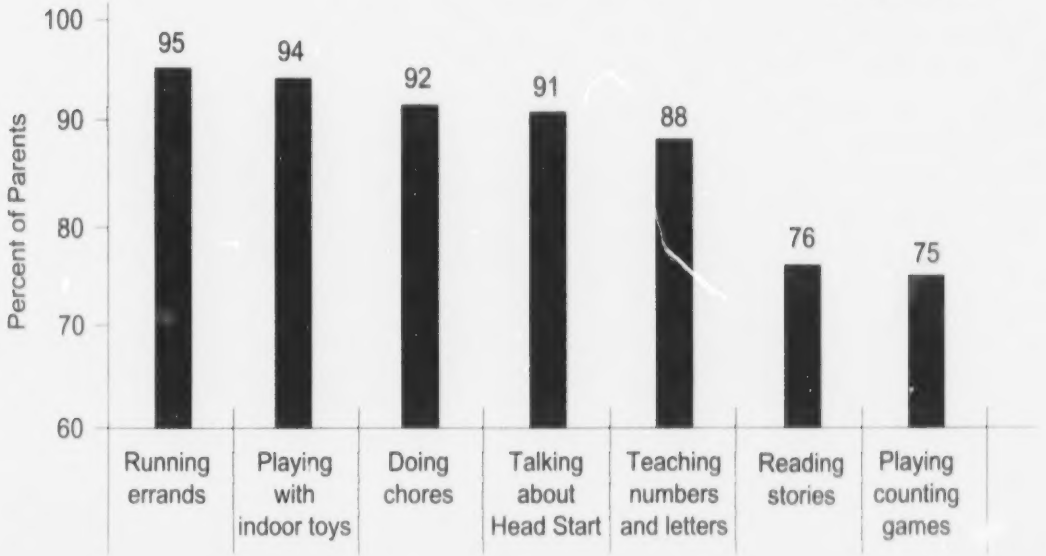


Benefits

Family Activities with Children

The majority of Head Start parents involve their children in a variety of activities at home, including going on errands, playing, doing household chores, and talking about the child's day at Head Start.

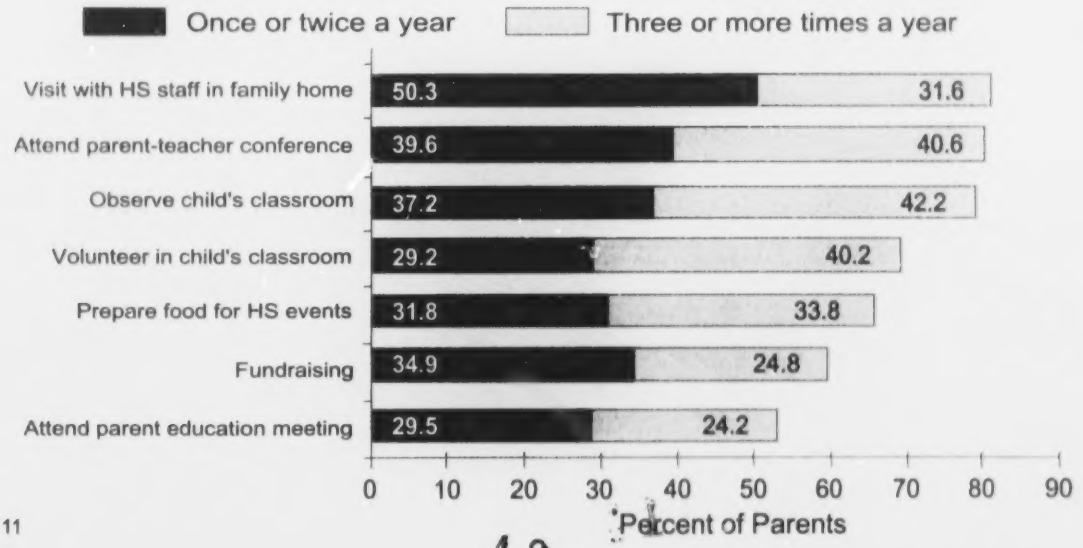
Spring 1997 data



How Are Parents Involved in Head Start Activities?

Head Start parents are quite active in their participation in many areas of the program.

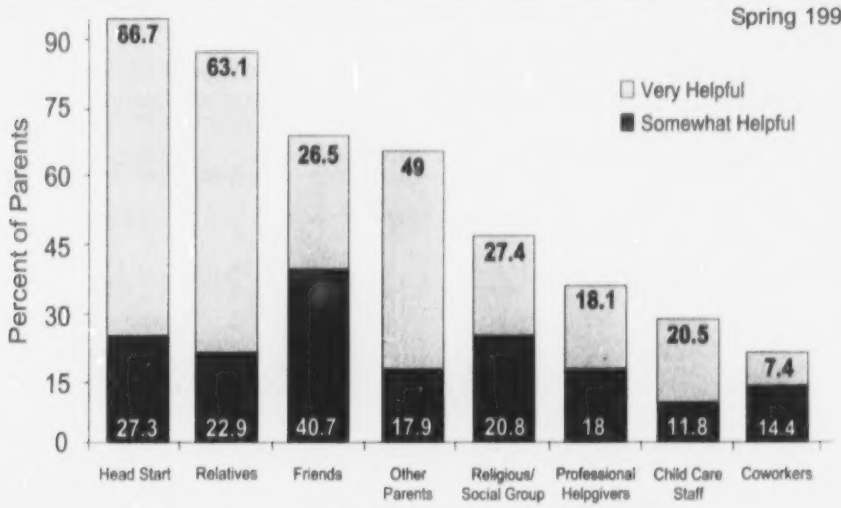
Spring 1998 data



Head Start as a Source of Support

Most parents reported that Head Start was very helpful as a source of support for raising their child. Overall, Head Start was considered slightly more helpful than relatives, and much more helpful than friends, other parents, coworkers, people of religious/social groups, professional helpgivers, or child care staff.

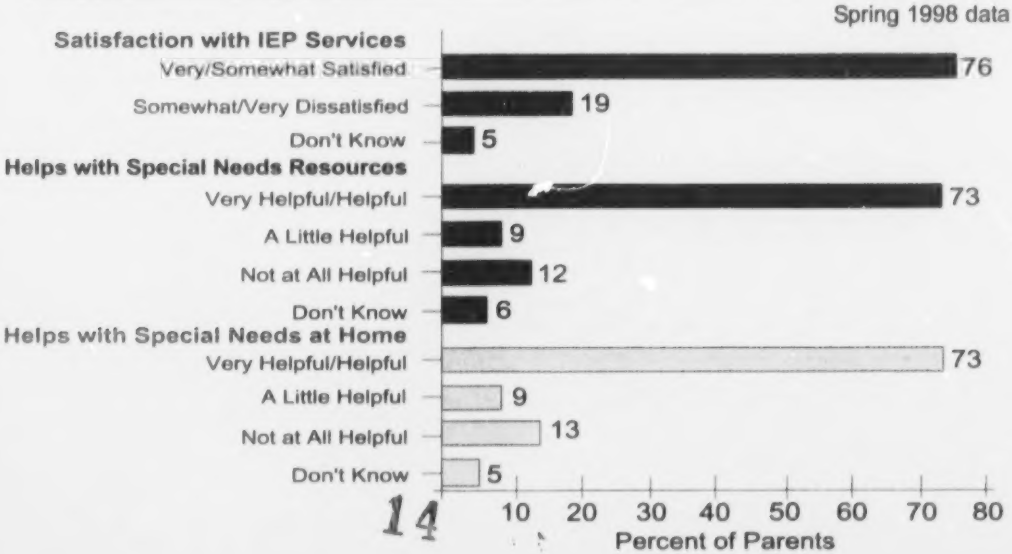
Spring 1998 data



Satisfaction of Parents of Children with Disabilities

Most families are very satisfied with the services Head Start provided their children with disabilities, including IEP services, help with special needs resources, and help with special needs at home.

Spring 1998 data



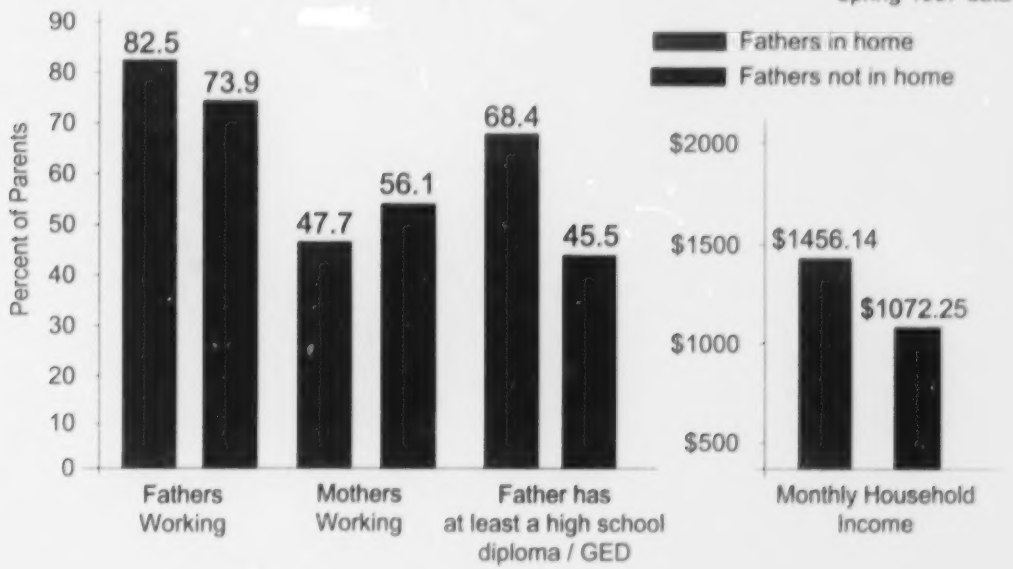
14

Benefits to

Fatherhood

Less than half of Head Start children (44 percent) live with their father in their home. When the father is present in the home, there are more resources available to the family, both socially and financially.

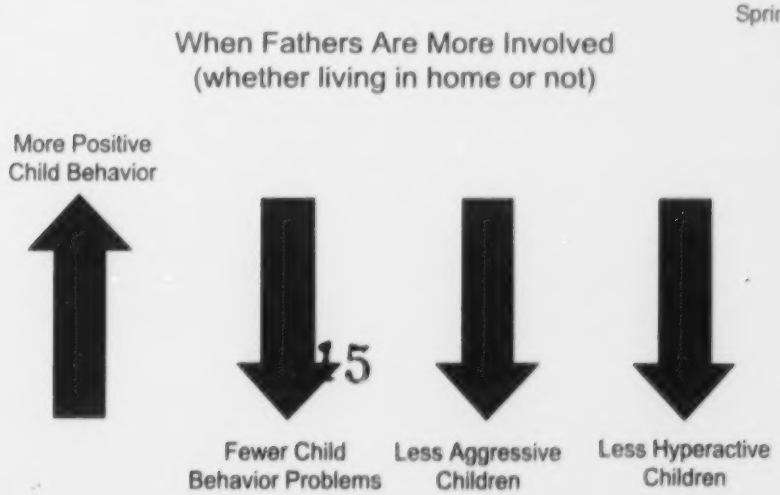
Spring 1997 data



Fathers Make a Difference

Regardless of whether fathers are present in the home, when mothers rate the fathers as more supportive in raising their children, the children had higher positive social behavior ratings and lower problem behavior ratings.

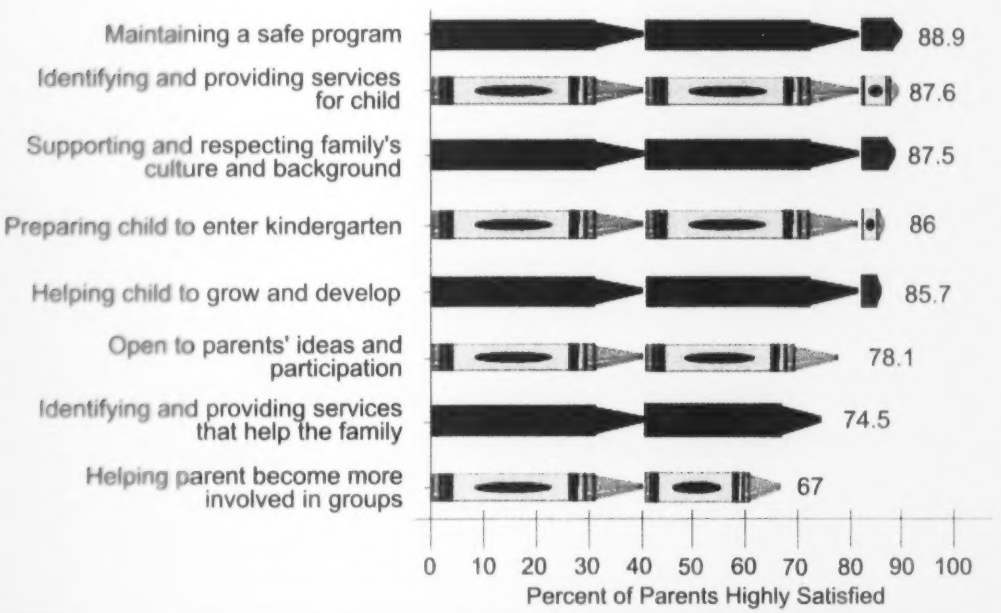
Spring 1998 data


When Fathers Are More Involved
(whether living in home or not)
More Positive Child Behavior
Fewer Child Behavior Problems
Less Aggressive Children
Less Hyperactive Children

Parent Satisfaction with Head Start

Parents provide highly positive reports about their and their children's experiences in Head Start.

Spring 1998 data


Maintaining a safe program
88.9
Identifying and providing services for child
87.6
Supporting and respecting family's culture and background
87.5
Preparing child to enter kindergarten
86
Helping child to grow and develop
85.7
Open to parents' ideas and participation
78.1
Identifying and providing services that help the family
74.5
Helping parent become more involved in groups
67
0 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90 100
Percent of Parents Highly Satisfied

Research Into Action: What Can We Do?

- Head Start has launched a new Family Literacy Initiative to train programs to implement best practices to foster literacy development for children and families. Programs can increase efforts to incorporate early literacy activities throughout the program, and promote daily parental reading to children through "reading awareness" campaigns, providing borrowing libraries for families to check out books, and emphasizing the importance of reading in parent education and involvement activities.

- In partnership with institutions of higher education, Head Start is working to ensure that a majority of teachers obtain associate's or bachelor's degrees in early childhood education over the next few years. More than $80 million in annual funding has been earmarked to pay for teacher training and to continue to increase staff compensation. Local programs can pledge to increase efforts to recruit degreed teachers and offer benefits to encourage teachers to obtain more degree-level education such as tuition assistance, flexible leave, and college credits for training.

- Head Start is planning a National Leadership Institute focusing on educational services in the areas of language development, literacy, mathematics, science, and social/emotional development in the year 2000. Programs can focus on these areas of the curriculum they are using to bolster classroom quality and children's outcomes.

- Head Start is requiring each program to build a local outcomes-based system to assess child development and learning. Programs can use this information to both individualize curriculum and teaching and to guide continuous program improvement.

For more information...

The following reports contain more detailed information about Head Start's Family and Child Experiences Survey (FACES) and Head Start's Program Performance Measures:

- Head Start Program Performance Measures: Second Progress Report (June 1998)
- Head Start Program Performance Measures: Longitudinal Findings From the FACES Study (2000)

To obtain a copy of these reports, or for a direct link to instruments used in the study, please visit the FACES website at http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb/hsreac/faces.

Reports can also be requested by fax (703-683-5769) or e-mail puborder@hskids-tmsc.org.

For related information on Head Start research, please visit the ACYF Commissioner's Office of Research and Evaluation website at http://www2.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/core or the Head Start Bureau website at http://www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/hsb.

Administration on Children, Youth and Families
330 C Street S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20447